

J 395 Advanced Social Science Methods

Spring 2017 (08355)

F 12 - 3, CMA 6.146

School of Journalism

The University of Texas at Austin

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Course Description and Objectives

J395, Advanced Social Science Methods, which takes students through the final steps of the research phase and introduces students to the post-research phase, is a hands-on seminar designed to develop proficiency in using SPSS, analyzing data, selecting statistics, interpreting results, and writing research-based conference papers and journal articles. Through a combination of readings, hands-on computer data analysis assignments, class demonstrations and presentations, and research paper writing, editing, and reviewing assignments, students will be able to:

1. integrate research, theory, and data analysis;
2. use SPSS to analyze data with proficiency;
3. conduct bivariate and multivariate analyses;
4. write, revise, and submit a scholarly conference paper;
5. critique a scholarly conference paper using the blind peer review process;
6. prepare a Powerpoint research presentation;
7. develop a plan for getting the conference paper published in an academic journal;
8. think like a scholar.

Class Time

Class time will be used for lectures, preparations for and presentations of data analysis assignments, discussions of writing assignments, hands-on SPSS data analyses, and one-on-one consultations.

Required Readings

Schutt, R. K. (2015). *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* (8th edition). Sage. (Text from J380.)

Additional readings from different sources will be made available on the course's Canvas site at <http://canvas.utexas.edu>.

Recommended Readings

Poindexter, P. M., & McCombs, M. E. (2000). *Research in Mass Communication: A Practical Guide*. Bedford/St. Martin's.

Course Requirements

Assignments

Participation (15%): Students are expected to: 1) read and respond to assigned readings, 2) turn in all assignments in time, and 3) actively participate in in-class discussions. Everyone is expected to think critically and help each other during the research process.

The instructor will monitor attendance or give in-class exercises from time to time. No make-ups for such exercises will be granted. There is no need to justify your absence, but more than 3 absences will result in an F (60/100) for participation, and more than 5 absences will result in a zero for participation.

Pretest and peer review of AEJMC conference paper drafts (20%): You will help each other conduct pretests and offer suggestions for revising research instruments. You will also review the draft of your partner's research paper. You need to submit a copy of your review of the paper by the deadline specified in the course calendar.

Data-based paper submitted to AEJMC conference (60%): Your research paper must be uploaded to the AEJMC website by the deadline (April 1). After you receive your submission confirmation, please forward it to the instructor, which accounts for 30% of your total grade.

To help you meet the AEJMC deadline, the paper will be developed in several stages—each with a deadline (see course calendar). These writing assignments are due at the beginning of class unless specified otherwise. They account for 30% of your total grade.

Powerpoint presentation of AEJMC paper (5%): Toward the end of the semester, you will give a 12-minute Powerpoint presentation of your paper to the class.

Always turn in professional-level written work, using the most recent edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* or *American Psychological Association (APA)* style for citing references. Points will be deducted for spelling, grammatical, punctuation, and capitalization errors.

Grading Scheme

A = 94 or above
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B = 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 67-69
D = 64-66
D- = 60-63
F = below 60

Missed Classes/Deadlines and Late Assignments

If an emergency prevents a student from taking a scheduled exam or meeting the deadline of a presentation, the student must notify the instructor prior to the exam or presentation. Otherwise, the student will not be eligible for a make-up. Make-up exams/presentations will be granted only for a limited time and only for valid, documented reasons, such as serious illness, family emergency, jury duty or military reserve obligation. Absence excuses are subject to verification. Presenting a false excuse will be considered a violation of the academic integrity rules.

If the deadline of an assignment is missed, all late work must be turned in within one week after it is due and will be downgraded for one letter grade no matter it is 1 or 7 days late. No late work beyond the one-week period will be accepted. Missed assignments will receive a zero.

Disruptive Behavior

Mutual respect is essential in this class. Therefore, please do not use your laptop computer or other electronic devices in class for purposes other than note-taking. In accordance with university policy, disruptive behavior will be documented and may lead to sanctions. Examples of disruptive behaviors in the classroom include arriving late to class, chatting, etc.

Academic Integrity

Be academically honest in every aspect of class work. All students are subject to the student code of conduct, including the University Code of Academic Integrity. For this course, *academic dishonesty* includes (but is not limited to) the following: fabrication (i.e., making up data, sources or information), plagiarism (using someone else's work in your work without giving proper credit), duplication (doing an assignment for this course and for any other course in this or any prior semester without the express consent of the instructor), and cheating (exchanging information with another individual during an exam). Violations of the academic integrity code will result in penalties in this course and all violations will be reported to the University. It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules of academic dishonesty -- ignorance is not a defense. When in doubt, consult the instructor before doing anything about which you are uncertain.

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course, e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. We will use your e-mail address in Blackboard.

Use of Canvas

This course uses Canvas, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Canvas can be used to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to take online quizzes and surveys.

You will be responsible for checking the Canvas course site regularly for class work and announcements. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Notification of these disruptions will be posted on the Canvas login page. Scheduled downtimes are not an excuse for late work. Canvas is available at <http://canvas.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 Monday through Friday 8 am to 6 pm, so plan accordingly.

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Q Drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231: "Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number."

Course Calendar & Readings 1.0 (Subject to Change)

1. Week of Jan. 20: Overview of the course; identify partners for pretesting your instrument; APA/Chicago style; Zotero; guidelines for writing literature review
2. Week of Jan. 27: Pretest and finalize research instrument
3. Week of Feb. 3: Finalized research instrument due Jan. 31
Individual consultations on data collection
4. Week of Feb. 10: Revised introduction, **literature review**, and revised research questions/hypotheses due Feb. 7
Individual consultations on data collection
5. Week of Feb. 17: Methods section due Feb. 14
Introduction to statistics using SPSS: descriptive statistics, cross-tabs, chi-square tests; t-tests and correlations; guidelines for writing the results section

Read: Ch 9 Quantitative Data Analysis; Ch 8 in Poindexter & McCombs (2000)
6. Week of Feb. 24: SPSS output/preliminary results due Feb. 21
Individual consultations on results
7. Week of March 3: Results section due Feb. 28
Individual consultations on results
8. Week of March 10: Understanding AEJMC divisions; guidelines for writing the abstract/discussion/limitations sections

Complete draft (including abstract, discussion, and limitations & future research sections) for peer review due March 11
9. Week of March 17: *Spring break*
10. Week of March 24: Peer review due 9 am, March 21
Individual consultations on final draft
11. Week of March 31: Individual consultations on final draft

Paper submission to the appropriate AEJMC division (April 1)
12. Week of April 7: Debriefing on AEJMC submissions; planning for presentations: research, poster, and high-density sessions; turning your conference papers into published journal articles

13. Week of April 14: Learn from other scholars: Insights on research
14. Week of April 21: Attend International Symposium on Online Journalism (April 21-22)
15. Week of April 28: Learn from other scholars: Insights on research
16. Week of May 5: Powerpoint presentation of AEJMC paper